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FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3076  
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0101  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 6390  
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 3272

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAPE TOWN 000111

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/S FOR RMARBURG AND MJAMES  
PRETORIA PLS PASS TO AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2019  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [SF](#)  
SUBJECT: WHY THE ANC LOST THE WESTERN CAPE

11. (C) Summary. On May 14, Poloff met with Chris Nissen, who spearheaded the ANC,s political campaign in the Western Cape. Nissen discussed the ANC,s failure to win the Western Cape in the recent April 22 elections as well as the ANC,s plans for the future in both the City of Cape Town and the Province. Although the ANC,s Western Cape office is theoretically spearheaded by Mcebisi Skwatsha, the National Executive Committee (NEC) is not happy with Skwatsha and therefore asked Nissen to step in and run the election campaign. Nissen, who is the Executive Chairman of Boschendal Winery, holds no official role in the ANC, but has been a party stalwart for many years. Boschendal gave him four months of paid leave to run the ANC,s campaign. Nissen said the ANC has never been hit so hard by factionism and that the ANC has gone down because of it. He also said the ANC lost most of its people to COPE in the Western Cape. End summary.

12. (C) Nissen said that most of the ANC members in the Western Cape who defected to COPE had legitimate reasons for leaving the ANC, namely their dislike of Skwatsha and the damage he has done to the party in the Western Cape. All branch executive committee leaders in the Western Cape left for COPE, &which left the ANC totally dysfunctional in the Province.<sup>8</sup> Richard Dunkie, Terror Lekota, Marius Fransmann and Ibrahim Rasool were all about to jump ship to COPE, until Nissen intervened. In January, Nissen approached each of these men and asked them not to leave the ANC. Nissen had the full support of the ANC,s NEC including Gwede Mantashe, the ANC Secretary General, but did not have the support of the ANC in the Western Cape. When he took over the election campaign in January, the polls showed 18 percent support for the ANC in the Western Cape. However, Nissen worked hard to bring back people to the ANC and he was able to increase the percentage of the vote to 32 percent on election day.

13. (C) Nissen said the ANC,s biggest mistake was &it didn,t keep its eye on the ball with regards to the Democratic Alliance (DA).<sup>8</sup> One predominantly colored area in the Western Cape, Mitchell,s Plain, didn,t have a single functioning branch so how could the ANC be expected to win, said Nissen. Nissen continued by saying there were 50,000 voters in the Western Cape who voted for the ANC nationally, but not in the Province. He continued by saying there were 20,000 spoiled ballots in the Western Cape and if the ANC had gotten those 70,000 votes the ANC would have deprived the DA of winning more than 50 percent of the vote and wining the Province.

14. ( C ) Nissen asked the NEC to remove Skwatsha from office and asked that the Provincial Executive Committee in the Western Cape also be dissolved. He believes the NEC will follow his recommendation. If so, there will be an interim committee, which will work towards building more branches since there are currently very few branches in the Western Cape. Nissen continues to work to try and bring people back

to the ANC from COPE and said the ANC will welcome them back.

15. (C ) When asked about the relationship between the DA which leads the Western Cape government and the ANC that leads the National government, Nissen said it will be a &competitive/love-hate relationship.<sup>8</sup> He does not think there will be violence, but said people could rise up in the townships if they don,t get service delivery and the DA Qtownships if they don,t get service delivery and the DA would likely blame it on the ANC saying they are not receiving enough money from the National government. Nissen added that &Premier Helen Zille was completely out of line regarding her recent comments about Zuma being a womanizer, but also said Malema (the head of the ANC Youth League) is a loose cannon, although Malema has done good things (for the ANC) in the poor communities.<sup>8</sup>

16. (C ) After the elections Nissen drafted a comprehensive report to the NEC entitled &Building a platform for the 2011 local government elections.<sup>8</sup> In his report, he explains that the colored communities do lack hope for the future and he argues that the DA instills fear in these communities against the ANC. (Note: In a similar vein, the ANC campaign in the Weteren Cape accused Zille of wanting to return South Africa to white minority rule. End Note) He reasons the colored people don,t feel black enough to receive the benefits of what the ANC has to offer, such as receiving a job, and the ANC failed in its duty to instill hope in these communities. Nissen said he would volunteer to work on the 2011 elections. He also said he knows he can have a prominent position within government if he wants it, but it would be a hard decision to make since he would have to give up his job with Boschendal.

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